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## ***The Monthly Food Stamp Cycle: Shopping Frequency and Food Intake Decisions in an Endogenous Switching Regression Framework***

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"The Monthly Food Stamp  
Cycle: Shopping Frequency and  
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### **A low-income household's**

success in procuring enough food throughout the month seems to depend on household members' shopping patterns. Mean food spending by food stamp recipients peaks sharply in the first 3 days after food stamp benefits are received. For

households in which members conduct major grocery shopping trips only once per month (42 percent of all food stamp households), mean food energy intake drops significantly by the fourth week of the month. For the remaining households, food energy intake remains steady over the course of the month.

This article makes two contributions to the study of food demand by U.S. food stamp recipients. First, it employs nationally representative data to describe and measure monthly cycles in food expenditure and food intake. Second, because the food intake cycle is found to depend on the frequency of major grocery trips, the article develops and estimates an econometric model of consumers' shopping frequency and food intake decisions in two halves of the food stamp month. The results of the model have implications for policies that affect the frequency of grocery shopping by food stamp households, such as delivery of food stamp benefits twice per month rather than once per month.